



IDENTIFICATION

Department		Position Title	
Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority		Mental Health Counsellor	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region	
48-11136	Fort Smith	Community Services, Community Counselling/ Fort Smith	

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

As a member of the Community Counselling Services team, the Mental Health Counsellor is responsible for providing comprehensive mental health services for the residents of Fort Smith. Services are provided in accordance with the NWT Mental Health Act; Child and Family Services Act; the NWT Community Counselling Program standards; and the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association standards. Services are intended to help improve the mental health and well-being of residents and their community.

SCOPE

This position reports directly to the Clinical Supervisor, Mental Health and Addictions. Located in Fort Smith, the Mental Health Counsellor is a key member of the Community Counselling Services team providing direct, community based culturally sensitive, therapeutic mental health services to clients. These services include but are not limited to: intake and screening; assessment; therapeutic Counselling and treatment; aftercare; prevention and promotion initiatives; planning and delivery of community based mental health services; case management; and crisis response. The Mental Health Counsellor is also a key referral agent and service provider for complex addictions and psychiatric clients.

The Mental Health Counsellor operates within a philosophy of education, prevention, therapeutic Counselling, out-patient treatment, and aftercare, to minimize the negative physical, mental, social and emotional impacts of mental health and trauma through providing clients with therapeutic interventions and support to maintain psychological well-being. This involves having the skills to work with various cultural groups and all members of the population (elders, adults, adolescents, children and families).



The incumbent works collaboratively within the Integrated Service Delivery Model (ISDM).

This position impacts on community health and well-being through increased awareness and treatment of mental health issues, reduction of suicides and alcohol related deaths and illnesses, as well as the reduction of family breakdown through prevention, therapeutic Counselling, and crisis intervention. By providing mental health therapeutic services within the community, fewer individuals will need to be referred out of the community, reducing costs overall.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. Using a best practices model, the Mental Health Counsellor is responsible for, independently and as part of the Community Counselling Services team, providing a continuum of clinical Counselling services for children, adolescents, adults, couples, families and groups in all areas of mental health.**
 - Conduct screening, intake, and bio psychosocial assessment protocols with clients for a variety of conditions and disorders including, but not limited to: disorders identified in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fourth Edition (DSM-IV), addictions, family violence, suicidal ideation, grief and loss, residential school and intergenerational trauma, FASD, concurrent disorders, sexual/physical assault, as well as problems and interpersonal issues with work, school, family or other important areas of function causing distress.
 - Provide short and long-term client centered therapeutic Counselling services in individual, family, or group formats using a treatment modality that best fits the client(s) including, but not limited to: solution-focused, cognitive-Behavioral, family systems, stages of change, motivational interviewing, harm reduction, and/or art and play therapy models.
 - Provide aftercare and follow-up Counselling, following in-patient treatment for addictions, family violence, suicidal ideation, self-harm, or mental health related hospitalization, participating in discharge planning where possible. Aftercare services may include medication monitoring and keeping in regular contact with clients.
- 2. The Mental Health Counsellor is responsible for, independently and as part of the Community Counselling Services team, providing comprehensive mental health and case management services.**
 - Take a lead role in case management and case planning for mental health clients.
 - Conduct care coordination/planning involving necessary professionals/traditional healers/services on a regular basis.
 - Make referrals where required, both within and outside the employing Health and



Social Services Authority.

- Provide consultation to physicians when determining need for hospitalization and possible medevac for mental health issues.
- Provide leadership and advocacy with clients in working with other agencies.
- Be available to take on-call duty on a rotating basis with other staff, during weekends and statutory holidays.
- Prioritize and identify community and regional resources for each client in crisis. From time to time the incumbent may be required to act as a psychiatric escort.

3. The Mental Health Counsellor is responsible for contributing to the effective functioning of the Community Counselling Program (CPP) standards for practice and enhancing the development, delivery and continuity of mental health care services.

- Complete intake reports, clinical notes, discharge summaries, referral letters, and other documentation as required in the format set out by the Department of Health and Social Services and Clinical Supervisor, Mental Health and Addictions.
- Evaluate therapeutic Counselling and treatment outcomes to determine the best service for clients.
- Participate actively in community interagency meetings, especially as they relate to the socioeconomic environment with respect to emerging developments such as self-government and economic development and understand the impact of these developments on the well-being of individuals.
- Participate in service evaluation, data collection activities, and other program design and delivery initiatives.

4. As a member of the team who provides mental health and addictions services, the incumbent together with co-workers of the Community Counselling Services team is a consultant and leader on mental health issues within Fort Smith.

- Provide community awareness and education. This includes but is not limited to providing presentations and/or workshops that raise awareness of relevant mental health issues within the community.
- Work in partnership with the Community Wellness Workers in providing education sessions to professionals.
- Provide orientation and training on mental health, addictions, and family violence to key stakeholders within the community (i.e. RCMP, nurses, schools, non-government organizations, band councils, etc.).
- Provide materials and expertise to community groups.

5. Mental Health Counsellors are responsible for conducting suicide risk assessments and Mental Status Exams and providing recommendations regarding care and



monitoring to clients who may be in RCMP cells, Health Centre or referred by any third party.

- Complete screening and risk assessment for suicide and mental status with all client groups and individuals.
- Provide consultation to physicians and medical staff based on outcomes of screening and risk assessments.
- Make referrals where required.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Physical Demands

Risk for dangerous, violent and abusive situations is present on a daily basis, possibly for duration of 30 - 60 minutes at a high intensity. Lifting and carrying heavy bags (presentation materials) required on a daily basis for 15 - 30 minutes, low intensity. Sitting for long periods is required on a daily basis for duration of 60 minutes, moderate intensity.

Environmental Conditions

Exposure to communicable diseases, (e.g. Tuberculosis, hepatitis C, AIDS) on a daily basis for 30 - 60 minutes, low intensity. Work with a high risk population that may be aggressive, violent or otherwise extremely distraught and/or agitated at times on a daily basis, 7.5 hours, moderate intensity.

Sensory Demands

Sense of hearing for communication verbally on a daily basis for 7.5 hours, moderate intensity. Sense of sight for non-verbal communications and assessing the physical surroundings on a daily basis for 7.5 hours, moderate intensity. Required use of combined senses of touch, sight, smell and hearing during assessment and provision of care, 7.5 hours, moderate intensity.

Mental Demands

Care and support for clients who are experiencing stress and crisis as well as their families on a daily basis for 7.5 hours, high intensity. Caring for clients who may be angry and difficult to work with on a daily basis for 7.5 hours, moderate intensity, leading to impact on incumbent's private life. Working in a cross cultural setting, encountering clients with different value systems and languages on a daily basis for 7.5 hours, moderate intensity. Making timely decisions that could have far reaching effects (including life and death with suicidal clients) on the client's well-being on a daily basis for 7.5 hours, moderate/high intensity. Fluctuating workload depending on unpredictability of clinical situations on a daily basis for 7.5 hours, moderate intensity, leading to a disruption in lifestyle. Exposed to crisis situations (i.e. Client



contemplating suicide) which can cause stress due to unforeseen outcomes, on a daily basis, moderate/high intensity. Numerous coordination and logistical details requiring attention to detail and organization on a daily basis for 7.5 hours, moderate intensity.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Working knowledge of therapeutic treatment options as well as the skill and ability to provide such treatment to people of all ages with mental health, addictions, and family violence issues.
- Knowledge of child, adolescent, and adult developmental, psychological, social, and cognitive development.
- Knowledge of the different referral agencies/services available within the NWT and community for those individuals who require in-patient or alternative assessment and care. This includes knowledge of referral routes and case management techniques.
- Working knowledge of and an ability to refer clients to traditional healers and elders.
- Working knowledge of the bio psychosocial presentation, determinants and precipitators of mental health and mental health disorders and the bio psychosocial presentation, and models of addictions (abstinence model, moral model, harm reduction model, etc.) in order to recognize and interpret findings and determine an appropriate treatment plan.
- An ability to appropriately use clinical, diagnostic and treatment planning terminology with clients, other health care providers and referral agents.
- General knowledge of the DSM-IV classification system, psychopharmacology and psychophysiology of disorders.
- Working knowledge of the signs of violence and/or abuse at an early stage as well as current trends and best practices in addressing psychological outcomes of violence.
- Knowledge of current trends and ability to apply best practices with clients for addressing risk factors for addictions, mental health disorders and family violence.
- Ability to apply the NWT Mental Health Act, the Child and Family Services Act, as well as knowledge of other NWT legislations.
- Adherence to a professional code of ethics and a working knowledge of the application of ethics in a variety of complex situations.
- Knowledge and understanding of the community demographics, values, culture, and history.
- Knowledge of and ability to network resources within and outside the employing Health and Social Services Authority to ensure support for clients and their families.
- Ability to communicate effectively in a cross cultural setting.
- Ability to draft written documents, which are clear, concise and easy to understand by both professionals and non-professionals.
- Ability to work as a team member as well as be self-directed, meet deadlines, prioritize workloads and manage several tasks at once.



- Ability to operate a desktop computer with a basic software package.
- Ability to commit to actively upholding and consistently practicing personal diversity, inclusion and cultural awareness, as well as safety and sensitivity approaches in the workplace.

Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:

A Master's level degree in Counselling, Psychology or Clinical Social Work or a related discipline with a focus on therapeutic counselling with one (1) year of relevant therapeutic counselling experience in a scope of practice or experience in addictions, mental health, and family violence.

The experience of the Mental Health and Addiction Counsellor should include clinically supervised education or work experience that includes at least 500 hours, where at least 120 of these hours are direct client contact. Additional hours are spent in face-to-face supervision, educational activities, documentation activities and professional development.

Equivalent combinations of education and experience will be considered.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Fort Smith Regional Requirements

The Mental Health Counsellor must be eligible to register as a Canadian Certified Counsellor (CCC) with the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association.

The Mental Health Counsellor must hold a valid class 5 driver's license

Position Security (check one)

- ☐ No criminal records check required
- ☐ Position of Trust – criminal records check required
- ☒ Highly sensitive position – requires verification of identity and a criminal records check

French language (check one if applicable)

- ☐ French required (must identify required level below)

Level required for this Designated Position is:

ORAL EXPRESSION AND COMPREHENSION

Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐

READING COMPREHENSION:

Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐

WRITING SKILLS:

Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐

☐ French preferred

Indigenous language: Select language

- ☐ Required
- ☐ Preferred